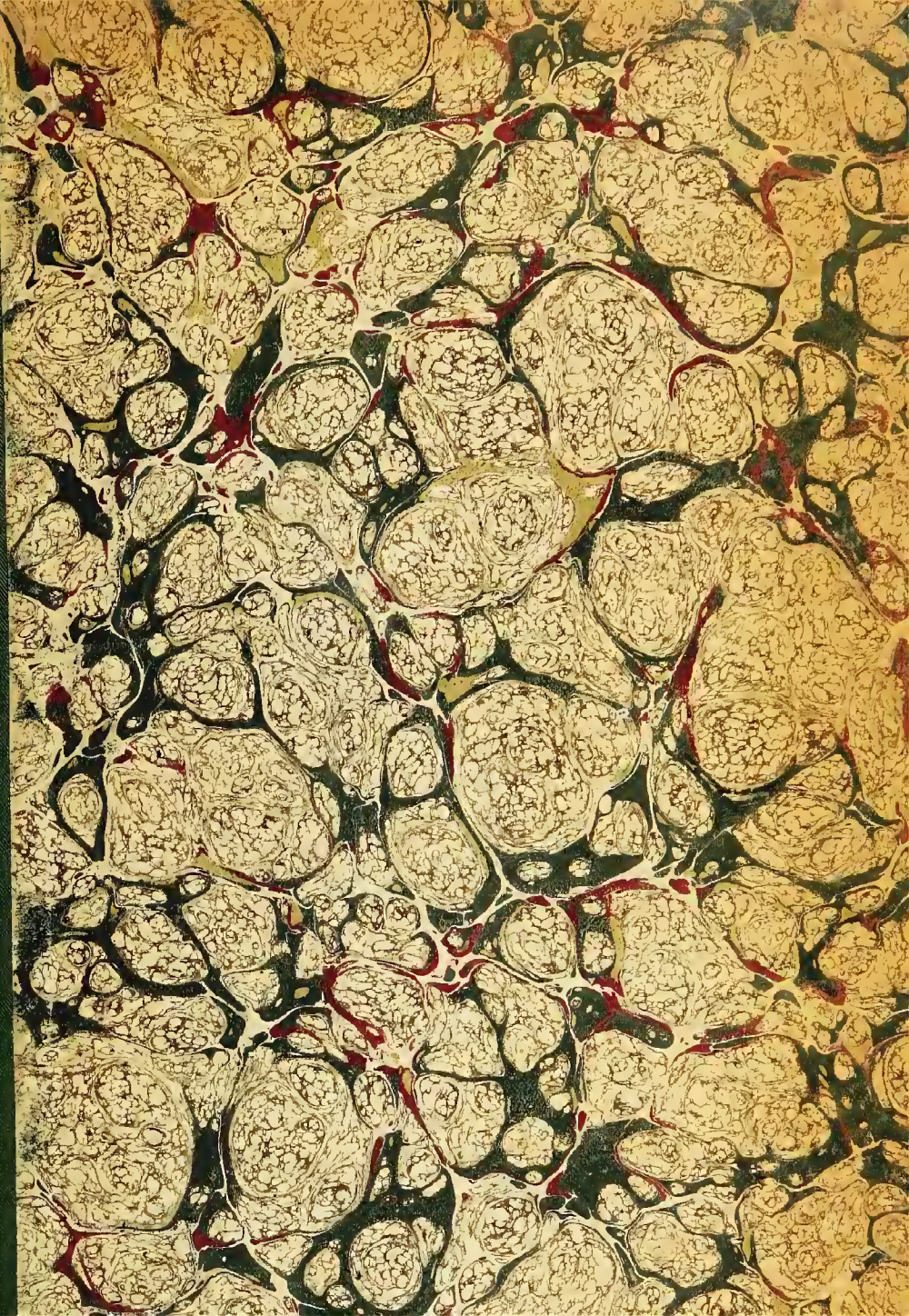


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THE BRIDE OF
DIONYSVS

R·C·TREVELYAN

THE BRIDE OF
DIONYSVS
A MUSIC-DRAMA AND
OTHER POEMS BY
R·C·TREVELYAN

LONGMANS, GREEN & COMPANY
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
NEW YORK AND BOMBAY. 1912

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TO
D. F. TOVEY

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

MINOS *king of Crete*
ARIADNE *his elder daughter*
PHAEDRA *his younger daughter*
THESEUS
DIONYSUS
ATHENIAN CAPTIVES *six youths and seven maidens*
NEREIDS
MAENADS
SATYRS
Cretan Heralds, Warriors, and Attendants.

NOTE

This version of "The Bride of Dionysus" differs only in a few unimportant details from a version which has been set to music as an opera by Mr. D. F. Tovey.

ACT I. SCENE I.

(The stern of a ship of state. MINOS enthroned with ARIADNE and PHAEDRA standing by his side. Heralds, warriors and attendants. The song of the CAPTIVES upon the unseen Athenian ship is heard faintly, as though from some distance.)

CHORUS OF ATHENIANS.

Dark ship of doom, slow, yet more slow
Southward o'er bright surges go!
Nay, black sail, stay, ah stay!
Droop, droop; fall limp and slack.
Blow, thou wind, another way:
Waft me swift to Athens back.

Ah vain, vain,
Heart to hope so fain!
Hope only thy death's pain.

MINOS.

Once more returned the wished-for day makes glad my soul.
From hated Athens once more yonder death-black sail
Draws nigh, bearing her tributary freight, death-doomed,
Righteous reprisal for my son Androgeos' blood.
Go then, ye heralds, haste and from their ship bring hither
Before my throne these children of those that slew my child.
With furled sails now I bid their ship no nearer ride.
If any strive, seize them, spare not, but lead them bound
Perforce. My captives are they now, so let them learn.

(Exeunt heralds and several armed men.)

CHORUS OF ATHENIANS. (Nearer.)

Athens, at the thought of thee
Tears are standing in mine eyes.
Yon dark alien hills no more they see:
Like a vision thou dost rise.
Thy tall cliffs with temples white

ARIADNE.

Alas, how can we deem such vengeance just,
For one life many lives?

MINOS.

Not by some private hand in obscure strife
He perished, but amidst the assembled citizens.
Ne'er yet contending at their festival
Had hero so divine to Athens come.
Maddened with savage envy they beheld
Their proudest champions by a stranger vanquished.
Whelmed 'neath their wolf-like fury, there in the dust
Stabbed, gashed and marred his fair young limbs sank down,
While with that noble blood forth gushed his life.
City and people justly had I destroyed:
Yet for this tribute hath my mercy spared them.

(ARIADNE turns sadly away.)

ARIADNE. (After a pause.)

Look, Phaedra!
Slowly the black sail from the mast drops down.
Our heralds leap to the deck: the captives shrink
In panic back to the stern.

PHAEDRA.

But among them is one more tall, more noble of mien.
Fearless and proud he stands.

ATHENIANS. (Off the stage.)

Theseus, help us! Theseus!

ARIADNE.

Hark, what a cry was that!
They seize, they bind them:
They would drag them along by force.

THESEUS. (Off the stage.)

Forbear, slaves! Forbear!
Touch them not! Bind them not!

Act I *ARIADNE. (Turning indignantly away.)*
Scene I Ah cruel! cruel!

THESEUS. (Off the stage.)
Poseidon, be with me now!
Poseidon, father!

CRETANS. (On the stage.)
Behold, behold him!
Like a lion he has leapt on them:
He has struck down the foremost:
At his feet he lies slain.
Athens shall pay this outrage.

PHAEDRA.
Like slaves they shrink back before him.
Unarmed he defies them.

CRETANS.
But in *his* hand now gleams a sword snatched from the slain.

MINOS. (Rising.)
Shame on these cowards! Dares no man go near
And smite this madman, or wrest his weapon from him?

PHAEDRA.
No madman is this, father,
See how he stands, fearlessly,
Calm and at ease, parleying with his foes.

MINOS.
Thus to defy me! Thus before my face
To slay my heralds!

PHAEDRA.
Hither he guides the boat.
Our spearmen hold aloof,
Silent, fearing his sword.

CRETANS.

Who is this that weaponless
Mocketh at spear and sword?
Can this be he
By whom Minotaur shall be quelled at length?

MINOS. (*With CRETANS.*)

Who is this that lawlessly
Scorneth the sanction of treaties?
Though these he fears not, yet is a servant mine
By whom ere long to fear shall he be taught.

(Enter THESEUS quickly, with a naked sword in his hand, leading the Athenian Captives. He walks straight up to MINOS, who has reseated himself majestically. ARIADNE and PHAEDRA return to their place beside the throne.)

THESEUS.

Hear me, thou who art called
The son of Zeus, noblest and most righteous
Among all Gods; not righteous now verily
Nor noble are thy deeds, O Minos.
Therefore do thou, as beseems a hero,
Restrain thy heart's lawless and overweening pride,
Even as I but now checked in his fierce insolence
And slew thy base wolf-hearted slave who violently
Laid hands upon these my comrades.
Captives are we, but not thy slaves.
Doomed are we, but not to shame and outrage.
Chosen by lot for death, that trial only
'Tis just that we endure.
Honouring even to death vows forced and bitter
Have we not this day come? Then nobly thine own treaty,
O king, do thou too honour.

MINOS.

Who then art thou?
What base Piraeian merchant was thy sire,
That thou shouldst dare

Act I Before the thrones of kings, children of Zeus,
Scene I Thus to lift up thy voice?
Disarm! Bind him!

(Several CRETANS are about to obey, but are checked by a gesture from THESEUS.)

THESEUS.

Forbear, Minos.
Though of earth's kings the mightiest
Thee beneath Ida's crests Europa bare to Zeus,
Know that I too am sprung from a race immortal.
Poseidon is my sire: to him Aithra,
Daughter of noble Pittheus,
In wedlock bare me on Sphairia's sacred isle.
Of purple and gold threads in the halls of the deep sea
Her bridal veil the dark-haired Nereids wove.
Cease then: put base thoughts from thee, proud Minos:
For I might not endure
More to behold the glad light of the sun,
Could I protect my friends from wrong no more.
Rather will I do battle with thee here:
Then whether wrong or right shall this day triumph,
That let the Gods dispose.

CRETANS. (Aside.)

Bold of speech, dauntless of mien and proud,
As one sprung from a race divine he seems.

(MINOS laughs silently, then suddenly becoming stern, speaks.)

MINOS.

Vain fool, shame not the glory of Gods with lies.

ARIADNE. (Timidly.)

Father, to the Gods only is truth known.
Forestall not we their judgments.

PHAEDRA.

Yea, father, beware, oh beware!

MINOS.
Within my keeping, by the great Gods' will,
Secure their justice upon earth abides.

(Re-enter the CRETANS from the Athenian ship.)

CHORUS OF ATHENIANS.

Where, where is thy dwelling, Justice, O thou most holy?
High in Olympus amid the Gods' proud bliss,
Is thy throne set there?
Nay, for thee what do the great Gods care?
Thou art not of them; thou art wise and lowly.
Of other parentage and elder birth,
Thou in their praise and worship hast no part:
Yet art thou too divine.
Though no man hath seen thy temple, in all the earth
Though altar none be thine,
Yet, Goddess, in the pure and gentle heart
There only is thy shrine.

THESEUS. (Together with ARIADNE, MINOS, and PHAEDRA.)

Where, where is thy dwelling, Justice, O thou most holy?
On earth dost thou abide within his heart
Who hating fears not wrong,
The righteous the undaunted and the strong.
So trusting now may I shame not my birth,
Poseidon, sire divine.

ARIADNE.

Thou with the Gods that dwellest, Justice, O thou most holy,
Hear now my prayer: to the earth
Descending, in man's heart
Where now alone dwell vengeance, pride and wrath,
There, there make thou thy shrine.

MINOS.

Thou that upon unrighteousness and guilt
Dost bid just vengeance fall,
Who ne'er forgettest blood upon earth once spilt,

Act I In vain on thee, dread Goddess, do these call.
Scene I And thou proud youth who gloriest in thy birth
 And parentage divine,
 Soon shall we prove what thy bold boasts are worth.

PHAEDRA.

Father, beware, beware!
If he speak truth, no son
Of hated Athens is this man, but one
Of mightiest parentage and glorious birth,
Even as thine own, divine.

(Meanwhile the Cretan warriors are debating with increasing agitation among themselves, until MINOS rises, and lifting his hands in prayer, invokes ZEUS.)

MINOS.

Hear me, thou in Olympus! Hear me, O Zeus most mighty!
Am I in very deed thy child? Yea then,
In a bolt of fire,
Out of the clear sky terribly flashing forth,
Be thou revealed my sire!

(The eyes of THESEUS and PHAEDRA meet. THESEUS gazes at her as though lost to his surroundings. After a short interval there is a flash of lightning and a burst of thunder. THESEUS drops his sword. PHAEDRA recoils in terror.)

MINOS.

Heard'st thou? Hast thou beheld?
The unclouded heavens lighten; the windless air
Filled with the voice of his thunder trembleth yet.
He hath struck the sword from thy hand.
So swiftly, so mightily
His son doth Zeus vindicate.

(He comes forward and stands beside the bulwarks close to THESEUS, who recovers his self-possession.)

But if thee verily
To Poseidon lord of Ocean
The daughter of Pittheus bare, as thou wouldst boast,
Then this bright golden ring,
Lo thus from my hand I pluck,
Thus down to the waves fling it.—Do thou too now,
To seek it, from the bulwarks fearlessly fling
Thy body down to thy father's halls: there bow
Before his throne: whatever his dear son
Shall crave, nought doubtless shall the God deny,
But give thine ooze-born Triton brothers charge
To seek and on thy finger set my ring,
Then bear thee safely through the cleft waves back.

CRETANS. (Aside, during the speech of MINOS.)
With wise and kingly craft, as he is wont,
Of this bold madman shall Minos now be rid.
So to death wasted his youth and beauty go.

THESEUS.
Great son of Zeus, this quest whereto in pride
Thou hast provoked me, without dread I welcome.
When over me the dark wave shall have closed,
And the foam passed away, if to thy hand
Within this hour I render not thy ring,
Then let thy heart take courage and rejoice,
For then shalt thou behold my face no more.

ATHENIANS. (To THESEUS, during his speech.)
Heed him not; do not hearken.
Trust not his words: false are his thoughts and cruel.
Heed him not: be not inveigled.
Death, death is thy lot if thou shouldst hearken.

THESEUS. (To the ATHENIANS.)
Soon will I come again, my quest accomplished.
Poseidon for my sake shall now befriend you.

ATHENIANS. (Crowding round THESEUS.)
Leave us not, Theseus; leave us not!

Act I Without thee nought are we,
Scene I Nought but the spoil of death.

THESEUS.

O frail of heart, thus alone can I save you.

(THESEUS breaks from the ATHENIANS and leaps into the sea. Laughter of the CRETANS.)

CRETANS.

Farewell, son of Poseidon!

MINOS. (Resuming his throne.)

Homeward now set the sails; the wind blows fair.

ATHENIANS.

Alas for thee, Theseus!

Vain is thy faith; and woe to us who loved thee,
Who in thee only hoped and trusted,
Now desolate and despairing!

MINOS. (With the ATHENIANS.)

Aye, wail, weep.

Nevermore from the deep
Shall ye behold him rise; but drowned, lost,
To and fro ceaselessly rolled and tossed,
His hero limbs shall rot,
Whiten and waste.

ATHENIANS.

Though despair be within our hearts,
Though nought from the coming anguish
Of death now can save,
Yet for ourselves lament we not this day,
But for him, the true, the brave,
Who by false craft beguiled,
For our sakes his youth and beauty,
His strength for our weakness,
For our lives his life and glory
Nobly hath jeoparded, vainly hath cast away.

PHAEDRA.

No, for your own selves mourn.
For him let no tear fall. Nobly in pride
And hope did Theseus perish.

ATHENIANS.

Not from thee need we learn,
Daughter of Minos, that upon us ignobly,
Without praise, without pity our doom must fall.

MINOS. (With the ATHENIANS.)

But for you no hope shall lighten
The load of death's coming doom.
Poseidon answereth not.
Why riseth he not forth
From his waves in storm and wrath?

CHORUS OF ATHENIANS.

Behold us, O ye just Gods, in whose hands are the fates of men!
Take pity on our desolation, on our misery look down.
Is it thus ye have forsaken us? Will ye suffer wrongfully thus
The innocent to be given over a spoil to the cruel and proud?
Then let none at your altars worship with offering or incense more:
Let your deities be despised, nay, be counted abominable,
Since ye have chosen the oppressor and the tyrant for your friend,
Since evil is no more evil, nor justice in your sight just.

ARIADNE. (Going fearlessly across to the ATHENIANS.)

Friends, though none else show pity for you now,
Though the Gods awhile seem to forsake you,
Yet be not so cast down, nor let despair
So soon arraign Heaven's wisdom as unjust.
Still have I faith that, even as he hath said,
So from the deep, his quest fulfilled, shall Theseus
Make swift return. Oh then, I pray you, friends,
A brief while yet yours too let that faith be.

MINOS. (During ARIADNE'S words.)

Ah, child of a froward mother!
Disloyal and perverse!

Act I *PHAEDRA.* (*During ARIADNE'S words.*)
Scene I Alas, my sister!
 Pitiful out of season is thy heart.

MINOS. (*During ARIADNE'S words.*)
Nay, from the Labyrinth in this Theseus' stead,
If so she will, let *her* be their deliverer.

ONE OF THE ATHENIANS. (*To ARIADNE.*)
Nay, child of Minos;
By thy heart's gentleness and pity, thou
To hope hast been beguiled
Where hope is none.
What thine own eyes have seen perish,
Perished for ever deem.

(*ARIADNE retires and watches the sea.*)

MINOS.
Captives, whom deem ye this God's child to be?

(*A silence.*)

A CRETAN.
Speak, captives. The king questions you.

ONE OF THE ATHENIANS.
No God, but king Aegeus did men say
Was Theseus' father.

ANOTHER. By great deeds heralded
From a far land he came. As his lost son
Did Aegeus hail him. Yet to the Gods is known
Truth, and by them alone shall be revealed.

MINOS.
If Theseus be his son,
Why is Poseidon then less swift than Zeus
To vindicate his race?

(*A silence.*)

Of Glaucus and Palaimon have I heard
To sea-gods changed;
And of Ceyx and Alcyone transformed
From man to bird.
And what now of your Theseus shall we deem?
In the green halls of Poseidon, amid ocean-gods a god now, is he feasting,
From your misery estranged?
Or a sea-bird careless-hearted as in dream
On swift wings is he speeding o'er the wave?

CHORUS OF ATHENIANS.

O ye strong-winged foam-wanderers, glad birds of the sea,
A comrade of your roaming would that I too might be!
Would that hence over the dark wave now down I might leap!
Haply so yet, ere I perished, some God, swift to save,
Casting around me in pity a soft feathered form,
From the anguish of this being would release me to share
Mid the white flocks of ocean in a glad life and free,
Now exulting in fierce strife with the dark wings of the storm,
Over blue calms now lazily gliding, or rocked to sleep
By the waves' long slow heaving, without dread, without care.

(A distant trumpet is heard from the shore.)

MINOS.

'Tis time. Bind them.

(Several CRETANS approach the CAPTIVES and begin to bind their hands. The CAPTIVES make no resistance. Re-enter ARIADNE excitedly.)

ARIADNE.

Lift up your eyes! Behold!
It is he, it is he that cometh,
Forth from the cleft deep risen.
Over the waves like to a God he paceth.

(The CRETANS hastily release the CAPTIVES. MINOS rises.)

Act I *ATHENIANS AND CRETANS. (Dispersedly.)*

Scene I Behold; Oh there, there!

Hark, oh hark!

In mine ears a sound as of horns!

O great Poseidon!

Theseus, our Theseus!

Again, hark again!

Round him nymphs and Nereids hasting,

Dolphins gambolling, mighty Tritons onward plunging!

Hark to the deep conch-music!

PHAEDRA.

A purple mantle gleameth about his shoulders:

On his head a wreath of gold. Before his feet

The rough waves calm their crests and sink down still.

ATHENIANS.

Listen, oh listen to the Nereids singing.

UNSEEN CHORUS OF NEREIDS.

Farewell, Theseus!

Child of Poseidon, fare thee well!

Throughout all the earth

Of thy fame and worth

All times to come shall tell.

Would that in thy sire's domain

With us to dwell awhile thou hadst been fain.

Now once more, as at thy birth

Forth from the sea we came, and on her child

First thy mother smiled,

So now a glad and solemn strain,

As then we sang, we sing again.

Theseus, fare thee well, oh fare thee well!

(The song of the NEREIDS dies away. MINOS reseats himself. Enter THESEUS clothed in a rich purple mantle, and crowned with a wreath of gold entwined with dark roses.)

ALL. (Except MINOS.)

Hail to thee, Theseus! Child of Poseidon, hail!

THESEUS.

To thee, Minos,
Thou mightiest child of Zeus, Poseidon sendeth
Fair greeting from the deep by me his child.
Lo this thy ring,
Which ne'er again thou hadst hoped to behold,
To thy hand I restore. This task is finished.

MINOS. (After a pause.)

So be it. In equal strife
Here with Poseidon's son must I contend.
Yet was thy blood no less divine, Androgeos,
Thy noble blood, spilt by accursèd Athens,
And in her children justly thus avenged.
Nought, Theseus, shall thy birth avail thee soon,
When listening for the step of Minotaur
Weaponless—

PHAEDRA. (Interrupting.)

Father, against this brood of Athens
Just indeed is thy vengeance. But Theseus,
By divine birth Trozenian Aithra's child,
Of that alien guilt partaking need he die?

ARIADNE.

Yes, father, in the death's anguish
Of the least of these thy captives
What profit shalt thou find?
Not for Theseus only, but for all these—

MINOS.

What impious madness blindeth thee?
Dost thou forget the treaty,
The tribute for her guilt with holiest oaths
By Athens sanctioned? Forgotten is now thy birth,
Thy brother's wronged and wrathful ghost, thy loyalty?
Though thou forget, yet may not I, nor thus
Deserve my warriors' scorn

Act I Whose spears o'erthrew the Athenians in their pride.
Scene I For them let none dare plead. Their doom is just.

PHAEDRA.

Yet from that doom so just
Perchance the Gods shall save them for the sake
Of Theseus, whom they love, as thou too mayest.
Or wouldst thou that as already against thee
So against Minotaur the Gods should aid him?

MINOS.

Peace, Phaedra!
When we shall need thy counsel, speak thou then.

*(Loud trumpet signals are heard from the shore. The ship
has reached the landing-place. MINOS rises and continues.)*

Captives, behold your weary voyage's end.
And thou, proud Theseus, turn thine eyes, mark well
Where clinging vast round yon cliff's quarried base
The masterwork of Athenian Daedalus,
Minotaur's lair, lifts high
The compass of its walls abrupt and blank.

THESEUS.

Hail, longed-for sight!

MINOS.

These captives without bonds
For thy sake thus I suffer.

(Exeunt in procession to the shore.)

END OF ACT I

ACT II. SCENE I.

(Night. A room in the palace lighted by a single small lamp. On opposite sides two entrances are visible, one a closed door, the other a doorway covered by a curtain. THESEUS is alone, pacing restlessly to and fro.)

THESEUS.

Slowly one by one night's hours pass by.

(He goes up to the curtain, lifts it and looks within; then continues, coming forward.)

How soon all these like tired children sleep!
From care-spent hearts awhile
Death's dread shadow is lifted. I alone
Sleep not, nor sleep my thoughts.

(He sits down on a couch.)

Together by their father's side they stood,
When first I saw her: yet alone she seemed,
The other but her shadow by her side.
Her eyes met mine and smiled: straightway all else
Faded afar: dim silence drowned my sense
As tranced awhile I gazed. In the whole world
Was nought else then save she and I alone.
The sword fell heavily from my hand; my trance
Was broken: there still before me Minos frowned.

(He rises, and paces to and fro again.)

Oh would that now that sword were mine once more!
Weaponless, without aid of God or man,
How small should be my hope! Yet I hope still.
Methinks so hoped Jason,
When restless in like evil case he lay,
And to him while all slept, secretly,

CHORUS OF ATHENIANS. (Unseen.)
Wanes the night: slowly
The day is born.

PHAEDRA.
The captives!

THESEUS
They have wakened!

CHORUS.
Oh sleep unblest! Dread dawn!
No comfort bringest thou, no hope, no rest
To prisoned souls that wait,
Doomed souls forlorn,
Within the shadow of Death's gate.
Wanes the dark: slowly
The light is born.

THESEUS.
I must go in to them.
The night is scarce begun: before them still
Long hours forlorn and comfortless.

CHORUS.
Wanes the night: slowly
The day is born.
—Not yet, not yet the dawn!
—Oh sleep unblest!
No comfort bringest thou
To prisoned souls that wait,
Doomed souls forlorn,
Within the shadow of Death's gate.

ARIADNE.
Alas!
Would that we now had hope and comfort for them!

Act II
Scene I

PHAEDRA.

Go to them, sister.

It rends the heart to hear their dirgelike woe.

Some comfort by thy presence thou canst bring them.

(Exit ARIADNE through the curtained doorway. THESEUS and PHAEDRA remain silent awhile, then THESEUS speaks.)

THESEUS.

Oh let me know thy name.

PHAEDRA.

Theseus, I am Phaedra,—

THESEUS.

Phaedra!

PHAEDRA.

—Child of thy foe, Minos.

Yet judge me not thy foe, not thy foe, Theseus.

When all else doubted thee, yet never

Did my heart doubt, not when above thy head

The foam had closed. As then thou didst prevail,

So shalt thou now.

THESEUS Phaedra, would that so

For ever I might hear thee speak. Thy words

Uplift and quicken. But alas, not so

Untied or broken may be the cords that bind us.

In the hands of the Gods yet lies my fate.

PHAEDRA. (Indicating his wreath and mantle.)

These gifts thou wearest the Gods gave thee. Shall not

Their charm preserve thee?

THESEUS.

What shall these vain gifts

Far from Poseidon's magic halls avail?

Not here against the sun of supreme Zeus

Contentds Poseidon. In the hands of the Gods

Now lies my fate.

Act II (Dropping the curtain, and approaching THESEUS.)
Scene I

Farewell, Theseus.
With heavy heart to Minos I return.
Once more, though he should slay me in his wrath,
Fervently shall my prayers—

PHAEDRA. No, sister: vain
With him were prayers. As soon might'st thou beguile
Theseus to swerve. Provoke his wrath no more.
Theseus, it cannot be
But thou, Poseidon's son, shalt vanquish here.
Heaven failed not Perseus in his need.

THESEUS. Not now
In Heaven's help must I trust.
A spirit and strength invincible
Alone let me inherit from the Gods.
Neither by spells nor prayers must I now conquer.
A dauntless heart and hand best magic deem.
Oh human might of Zeus-born Heracles,
As for thy labours once, so now for mine
Let that best gift suffice.

ARIADNE. (*Aside, during the words of THESEUS.*)
Ye righteous Gods,
Oh wherefore thus unheeded and unheeding
Dwell ye apart, and suffer hate and pride
To usurp within Man's heart your rightful shrine?
Ye Gods, since then evil is no more evil,
Nor justice in your sight just, mine be it now
What may be done to dare;
Though death be my reward, from death to save.

PHAEDRA. (*Aside, during ARIADNE'S words.*)
Fail me not now, fail me not, Aphrodite!
And thou whom most I worship, Hecate,
Britomartis, dread Dictynna, queen of gloom
And magic spells that bind souls and unbind,

Hear thou my prayer: oh succour Theseus now
In his own proud and wilful heart's despite:
Oh save from death this day.

*(Exeunt ARIADNE and PHAEDRA. The ATHENIAN CHORUS
is heard within finishing their song of Justice.)*

CHORUS OF ATHENIANS. (Softly.)
Though no man hath seen thy temple, in all the earth
Though altar none be thine,
Yet, Goddess, in the pure and gentle heart
There only is thy shrine.

THESEUS. (Seated, meditatively.)
Of this and that we hear men speak, as though
Of things familiar and well known; yet nought
Thereof in very truth we know at all.
So of Love oft lightly have I thought and spoken;
So in Death's eyes have I looked, yet felt no fear;
But in thine eyes, O Love,
Ne'er did I gaze till now.
Now only do I know thee as thou art.
And, Love, till I knew thee,
How save in part might I know Death? Death's bitterness
From thee first have I learnt.

CHORUS OF ATHENIANS.
Oh Earth, Earth, for blood once shed upon thee
Shall nought avail, no vengeance, no redemption?
Not ours the guilt, yet ours
The anguish and the curse that sleepeth never.

(THESEUS begins pacing to and fro with growing agitation.)

Oh Earth, Earth, ever with fresh blood steeped
And steeped anew, when shall thy thirst be sated?
Athens, mother Athens, for thy sin
Thus without honour for thine honour's sake
We perish, we thy children, far from thee,

That to Necessity all things alike
Are servile, save alone
Reason and fortitude in man's free mind.

(He lies down, and tries to sleep. After a short space of time a dim light appears through the back wall, which opens, and through the opening ARIADNE enters.)

ARIADNE.
Theseus!

THESEUS.
Phaedra!

ARIADNE.
Hist! It is I, Ariadne.

THESEUS.
What more with me would Minos now?

ARIADNE.
Hardly at my own peril have I returned.
Theseus, weaponless into the Labyrinth
Must thou be cast: yet thither
Will I too enter; a sword—

THESEUS. *(Starting.)* A sword!

ARIADNE. —Will I bring thee.

THESEUS.
Fast locked will be the gates, the guard strict set.

ARIADNE.
There is a hidden gate through caverned rocks
Known to no man save Daedalus. He now
Shall guide me—

THESEUS. Daedalus! Wouldst thou trust
That ancient cunning traitor?

Act II
Scene I

ARIADNE.

Yes, 'tis he

Who by his cunning to this prison once more
Hath won me entrance, for their sakès, his countrymen,
Whom long years since, building their bane, he wronged,
But now would save. He to that door will guide me.

THESEUS.

And from that door shall Daedalus
Help thee to find us? Else
Lost in the Labyrinth's myriad-branching maze
Thou too shalt perish.

ARIADNE.

No: see what I bring.

Each tangled crypt, each cavern's winding snare
Did Daedalus on these brazen tablets grave. (*Showing them to him.*)
Thus from the secret door this passage leads
To the great stairway's foot, where I must find you.
There in the dark await me. Stray not thence
One step; else are we lost.

THESEUS.

Ariadne!

How worthily may I recompense thy deed?

ARIADNE.

Ah, once imagined,
What else but this for me were possible
Born of like mortal nature with your own?
To Daedalus must I haste for counsel now.
At midnight Minos comes to take you hence.
Let them not stray one step from the stairway's foot.
Farewell. Here to our peril am I lingering.

(*ARIADNE retires by the way she came. THESEUS stands awhile gazing at the wall which has closed upon her.*)

THESEUS.

Her shadow did I deem thee? Oh blind, blind!

(*He turns and strides into the Captives' vault.*)

SCENE II.

Act II
Scene II

(In the Labyrinth. The moonlight, entering intermittently from above, as though obscured by drifting clouds, reveals the cliff-like walls of high narrow passages, curving away out of view in various directions. In the centre background broad stone steps lead down towards the front from a large closed gateway. The moonlight comes and goes for a while. A trumpet is heard at some distance, again nearer; then at last close to the gates, which open and discover a bright blaze of torchlight. The CAPTIVES, clothed in black, begin slowly to descend the steps, escorted by armed CRETANS. THESEUS is the last to enter. Above, MINOS is seen standing silently, sceptre in hand, with torch-bearers on either side. The CRETANS invoke the ghost of Androgeos in a solemn chant.)

CRETANS.

Androgeos! Androgeos! Oh hear us, awake and hear!
Lo, a city's blood once more is paid for a city's guilt.
For princely youth and beauty, vilely slain and trampled,
Evermore must youth and beauty perish vilely year by year.

ATHENIANS.

O tomb of death, dark tomb of hate,
How long, how long wilt thou devour
The children of our race?

CRETANS.

Chide not your fate: chide rather those who spilt
That blood yours must atone.

ATHENIANS.

Long ago blood for blood was spilt,—

CRETANS.

A city's blood for a city's guilt.

ATHENIANS.

For one life many lives were paid:—

Act II *CRETANS.*

Scene II Many must weep the woe by many sown.

ATHENIANS and CRETANS together.
Yet unslaked the thirst, unquenched the hate
Of the ghost of the slain.

ATHENIANS.
Oh when, when shall the dawn break?—Or is hope vain?

(The Athenians have now reached the bottom of the stairway, and the guards have withdrawn outside the gates. THESEUS stands at the foot of the stairs, facing MINOS, who addresses him at first with quiet sarcasm, then with increasing vehemence and passion as he proceeds.)

MINOS.
Son of Poseidon, thus far to the threshold
Of Minotaur's dark palace have I led thee.
Descend, and there wandering at will admire
Daedalus' masterwork, your country's glory,
Till at length from afar
Comes to your ears the voice of Minotaur
Seeking his guests. Then such welcome as once
Gave Athens to Androgeos, *her* guest,
Even such now shall ye meet with at his hands.
O City of Cecrops,
Thou monster than the Minotaur more pitiless!
While yet thy wives bear children, while unslaked
Androgeos' ghost cries for blood from the ground,
Never shall the remembrance of thy guilt
Cease, but from generation
To generation propagated still,
Vengeance and curse shall live! Nought then, my son,
Thy divine race availed thee, and nought now
Shall avail thine, proud Theseus, when thy doom
Draws nigh, a twiformed terror, vast, strong-hoofed,
Bull-mouthed and horned, man-handed, swift to leap
And grapple mightily as befits his breed,

Begotten of that famed bull, once at my prayer
Sent forth a sea-gift, Theseus, from thy father,
To do me honour—

Act II
Scene II

THESEUS. (Quietly.) What greeting wouldst thou send,
Minos, by me to the son of thy wife?

(MINOS starts, tries to speak, then motions with his sceptre, and the attendants hastily close the gates. THESEUS laughs. The moon being now clouded, the Labyrinth seems filled with darkness for a time.)

THESEUS.
Well did my father instruct me how thus
With a truth-winged shaft to prick the swollen pride
Of thy injurious pomp and majesty,
Thou righteous judge. Yet might I pity thee,
Dark rancorous soul, hate-frenzied and consumed.

ATHENIANS. (In awe-stricken whispers.)
Oh darkness horrible!
Silence vast and pitiless!
Dread footstep nearing stealthily through death's gloom!

THESEUS.
Hath she not promised? She will bring the sword.

ATHENIANS. (Severally.)
How should a woman dare enter this horrible
Sepulchre of inextricable doom?
Trust not the child of Minos.
Without worth shalt thou find her promise now.
Trust not that ancient wizard Daedalus.

THESEUS.
Not such is Ariadne, but in word
And deed most true. Wait silently. She will come.

(A pause, during which the moonlight again fills the Labyrinth.)

Act II *ATHENIANS.*
Scene II Hark! She comes. It is she.

THESEUS.

Silence!

How know we to what ears joy may betray us?

(ARIADNE appears in the moonlight, holding the sword and a clue. The ATHENIANS silently crowd around her and fall at her feet with signs of adoring gratitude. She approaches THESEUS and gives him the sword.)

ARIADNE. (Fastening the thread to a jutting rock.)

This flaxen thread, see, thus

Round this rock I knit fast.

Take it, and with each step unwind it heedfully.

THESEUS.

Oh wisely and subtly planned!

ARIADNE. (Giving him the clue.) Yes, by the cunning

Of ancient Daedalus. So shalt thou trace

Thy steps back hither. Hence follow still the thread.

Within the hidden gate by the sea-shore

Will we await thee. Already in secret there,

Prepared for flight, at anchor your ship rides.

(A silence.)

THESEUS.

When Minos shall have learnt your deed, what hope,

What refuge from his wrath shall then be thine?

ARIADNE.

No: for me take no thought. So I may save you,

With me it shall be well.

THESEUS.

Then only well,

If thou this day to Athens—

ARIADNE. (Hastily.) No, Theseus! Here
Must I remain. (*Seeking a pretext.*) Already
Is Daedalus fled. On him shall the wrath of Minos
Be spent. Were I to flee my fatherland,
What infamy were mine?

ATHENIANS.
Oh listen!—A footstep!—
His footstep!

(*ARIADNE listens for a moment at the wall, then laughs.*)

ARIADNE.
Through this wall the sound comes.
Many long minutes still down echoing paths
The maze must lead him ere he reach this place.
To the gate now let us haste.

THESEUS.
There lurk close hid, lest the bright moon betray you
To Minos' sentinels. Ere long will I come,
My task achieved.

ATHENIANS. No, Theseus; stay not here.
Thy life and ours hazard no more.

THESEUS. This service
Laid on me by the Gods shall I abjure?
Ariadne doubts not. Wherefore should I fear?
Never again shall Athens for these shores
Launch forth the cruel tribute of her shame.
Quenched in the blood of Minotaur this day
Must cease that curse.

ARIADNE.
Androgeos, brother, this day shall the tears
Shed for thee by thy sisters at length slake
Thy dire blood-thirst.

Act II
Scene III

(*To the ATHENIANS.*)

Come, follow silently.

(*She leads the ATHENIANS away down the passage by which she had entered. THESEUS goes off down an opposite passage.*)

THE VOICE OF THESEUS.

Ho, thou son of Pasiphaë! From Minos,
Thy foster-father, to greet thee am I here.

SCENE III.

(*A cavern looking out upon a background of moonlit sea and shore. PHAEDRA is standing at the entrance within the moonlight.*)

PHAEDRA.

Fail me not now, oh treacherous Aphrodite!
Not so first with false hope
Flatter, then leave me mocked and shamed. Then scornfully
From thy faithless, wayward godhead will I turn
To one than thee
More just and potent, Hecate, dark Stygian
Hecate, whose dread spells, no less than thine,
Control the hearts of men.

(*She advances towards the front further into the cavern, and stands listening.*)

Still from within no echo!
Would I had entered with her!
Earnestly for my life's sake she besought me
To depart hence, lest found in converse with her
Minos deem me deserving of her doom;
Then weeping bade farewell, as though no more

To see my face. Yet, sister,
Dupe not thy soul: dream not
My Theseus thine.
But would she steal from me his love; should he
Prove false, oh then, Hecate grant me patience
To watch them, to endure, to bide my time.

They come!

(She withdraws into a dark recess of the cavern.)

ATHENIANS. (Within.)
The light! Oh joy! We are saved!

(The ATHENIANS, with ARIADNE, enter dispersedly from a passage in the rocks towards the front.)

ARIADNE.
Go not forth! Beware!
Here in the gloom hide you till Theseus come.

ATHENIANS.
Alas, foolhardy! Ah, wherefore went he
To meet death's peril, when need was none?

ARIADNE.
With sword and clue no mischance need he fear.

ATHENIANS.
Yet what if in battle the clue,
Trampled, torn to and fro, were broken, lost?

ARIADNE.
From *my* hand in the darkness the thread slipped:
Yet backward a few steps groping, quickly I found it.
Oh then alone within those dusk-filled aisles,
Had I to such fears once yielded,
What, where had we now been?
(Aside.) Sister and comrades, kindred and sad home,

Act II Guilty of death beyond hope of pardon
Scene III Ne'er to return have I forsaken.

ONE OF THE ATHENIANS.

What sound was that?

ARIADNE. It is the wind that moans
Within the Labyrinth. Master your fears.
Good hope is yours yet to behold your fatherland.
Shame not Athens before a Cretan princess.

(Some of the ATHENIANS move towards the entrance of the cave, and look outside; others stand within, listening at the opening of the passage.)

ATHENIANS. (Severally.)
All is still, still as death, within.

Is it the ship? See'st thou?
Yonder in the moonlit bay so dim!

Oh Naxos,
Before the morrow's twilight shall mine eyes
Behold once more thy hills by Bacchus loved?

No, let us shun those satyr-haunted shores,
Where roams the fierce night-revelling Maenad rout.

ARIADNE.
Fear them not. Chaste and holy are the rites
Of Dionysus. There on his sacred isle
Shall you find blissful harbour.

(Trumpets are heard in the distance.)

ATHENIANS.
Hark! A sound from without!

'Tis sentinel calling to sentinel from afar.

ARIADNE. (Aside.)
Hath Minotaur's death-cry waked the alarm?
Haste, Theseus, else all is lost.

ATHENIANS.
See, torchlight flares from the walls!
Minos is roused: soon will he come.
With sword and spear will the ways be beset.

(The ATHENIANS, panic-stricken, are on the point of flight, when ARIADNE, who has been listening anxiously at the passage entrance, recalls them.)

ARIADNE.
Hark!

(The ATHENIANS rush back to the passage. The approaching voice of THESEUS is heard calling to them. They answer. THESEUS enters.)

THESEUS.
Hail, friends!
Slain is the Minotaur.
Haste ye, prepare the ship.
At the stairways foot he lies.
At his death-cry the guards broke in.
Long there may they grope through Daedalus' masterwork.

(Exeunt ATHENIANS. THESEUS gives ARIADNE the clue.)

Here, O my deliverer, my beloved,
To thee I restore the clue, Love's thread that binds us.

ARIADNE. (Shrinking back.)
No, Theseus!
As the Gods' chosen champion at their hands
Mayst thou accept their service. But I—thy love,
How, by what right should I, the child of Minos,
Thy hated foe, accept it?

Act II
Scene III

THESEUS. By what right
Thou, my deliverer? Through thee alone I die not:
For thee now must I live.

ARIADNE. For the whole world
Must Theseus live.

THESEUS. Ariadne, hear me!

ARIADNE.
Still on thy destined labours for mankind—

THESEUS.
Ariadne, hear me! By Cypris, Queen of Love,
I swear that I love thee.—

(*ARIADNE turns away from him to hide her emotion.*)

Oh despair. What now,
Ariadne, without thee were life and victory,
Thy gifts without thy love?

ARIADNE. (Yielding.)
Theseus!
Dreamlike—dreamlike seems this joy.

THESEUS.
Trust but thy dream.

ARIADNE. Theseus, in thee I trust.

THESEUS.
My bride, my Ariadne, my beloved!

ARIADNE AND THESEUS.
O Spirit of Love, glad wonder! O bright birth
Of measureless hope kindling through despair!
O lips life-giving as the smile of dawn!
Radiance wonder-working as the sun!

THESEUS.

From Love's bowl am I drunken. Of Love's vintage
With me, O my belovèd, drink thou too.

ARIADNE. (Joined at times by THESEUS.)

From Love's bowl, O chosen cupbearer,
Pour forth thy wine anew:
For I fain would drink deep, till I become
A wanderer from myself: of self weary
Is now my thirsting soul.
Oh fly, fly, escaped from thy dark cage homeward,
Glad bird, thy wings outspread! aloft, fly homeward now!
From the toils of death and hate by Love delivered.
Lo now the dawn breaketh, the night is over.

(Re-enter an ATHENIAN hastily.)

ATHENIAN.

Theseus!
Haste, haste! They come! Hark to the clash of arms!

(PHAEDRA, who has been watching, rushes forward, and flings herself on her knees before ARIADNE and THESEUS.)

PHAEDRA.

Sister! Hear me!

THESEUS. (Bewildered.)

Phaedra!

ARIADNE.

Phaedra, what dost thou here?

PHAEDRA. (Addressing both.)

Oh take me with you. Leave me not here to perish.

ARIADNE. (Raising Phaedra.)

Kneel not thus to me, my heart's dear sister.

Act II *PHAEDRA.*
Scene III Minos will slay me, when your flight is known.
 In his sight one with thine shall seem my guilt.
 Oh take me with thee.
 Thy joy, as now thy peril, let me share.

ARIADNE.
Could I forsake thee, Phaedra?
Come, Theseus.

(Exeunt amid sounds of approaching pursuit.)

END OF ACT II

ACT III. SCENE I.

(The seashore of the island of Naxos by moonlight. PHAEDRA is standing alone, with a wand in her hand, beside the instruments of her art, a small magic wheel and a tripod, on which a thin flame is flickering.)

PHAEDRA.

In vain! In vain!
Low dies my fire, and low
Hangs the moon, sinking slow.
Mockingly yonder the waves whisper and moan:
The night passes, and I
Heart-sick wait still, still here alone.

O Hecate, Hecate!
Wilt thou not hear me? What have I left undone
That I should do?
What rite neglected? Lo,
Once more on the flames these magic herbs I throw,
These leaves of laurel strewing.
As the fire that slept now wakening leaps up high,
So now in his heart set burning may the old love waken.
As the leaves by the quick flames taken shrivel and are seen no more,
May this new love in his heart so shrivel and die.
Now, now my chant renewing
Once more this brazen wheel,
To false, false love's undoing,
Slowly, set slowly turning.
Ah me! more low
Droops the moon, sinking slow!
As the wheel turns softly, softly,
So from her arms entwining, where now he lies,
Softly may he turn and softly rise,
Stealthily, lest she be wakened,
Forth from the false bride's bower with trance-rapt mind
Gliding silently, casting no glance behind,
Forth from the dim woodways,

Act III
Scene I

Out into the moon-white haze
Hastening with steps unfaltering,
(Swifter, my wheel, now swifter!)
On through the dew-drenched grasses,
Through briars that clutch and tear,
Over stones rough and bare,
Nothing heeding, forgetting all things,
Drawn by one tense thought only,
Overmastering, never altering,
Drawn swifter and yet more swift,
Nearer, more near,
Down the rocks o'er the sand and drift,
Till here,
Here at last he shall stand—
Where the slow waves sullenly, ceaselessly whisper and moan,
While night passes, and I
Heart-sick wait still, still here alone.

(A silence. She then continues passionately.)

Lost! Betrayed!
Hecate! Hecate! Is it thus thou wilt scorn,
O Hecate, me thy suppliant?

(After a pause she starts, then speaks with triumphant vehemence.)

The wreath! Ah yet the wreath!
This hallowed wreath I wear,
By him given me against our bridal day!

(Taking the wreath from her head.)

Yea mine his soul, even as itself is mine.
To thee, O my fire, to thee now will I give it.
Burn! Burn! Leap again fierce and gay!
For thee this mystic rose
Leaf from leaf thus I tear,
Leaf after leaf cast to thee thus thy prey.
Deathless petals, nurslings of Aphrodite,

Though fair and fresh as of old in her sacred garden,
Yet now by a magic than your own more mighty
In Hecate's fire-red rose writhe ye thus one by one,
Writhe, shrivel and die, deathless, delicate petals.
Yea mine, mine, mine
His soul who gave you, even as ye are mine.
Let him haste, haste hither
From the flame to save you, yea his own soul to save,
Lest that too wither,
Beneath my spells wither and waste and pine.
O Theseus, haste thee hither, for thou art mine.

(During PHAEDRA'S last words THESEUS has entered silently, and is standing a little distance from her as in a trance. She moves silently nearer to him, and speaks with subdued energy.)

Theseus, Theseus, at length art thou come?
Long have I waited: long hast thou delayed.

THESEUS.

Phaedra!—Methought even now
That thou wast near me: yet I saw not thy face;
But as in dream hastened I knew not whither,
Nor whence. Some deep forgetfulness had drowned
My soul, that followed still where Love might lead.

PHAEDRA.

Follow, still follow as Love leadeth. Come!
Come then, Theseus! Let us not linger here.

THESEUS.

There seemed one with me, yet it was not thou,
Some other there, whom following thee I left.
I would remember; but thought, searching in vain,
Wanders through dark oblivion, lost and blind.

PHAEDRA.

There is no need: follow me.

Act III (*The forms of the NEREIDS reveal themselves dimly in the*
Scene I *phosphorescence of the waves.*)

THE NEREIDS.

Waken, Theseus, waken!
Go not yet!
Shake from thy soul the spell's baneful power.
Wilt thou forget
Thine Ariadne, whom in Love's lone bower
Sleeping thou hast left, betrayed, forsaken?

THESEUS.

Ariadne!—Betrayed! Forsaken!

PHAEDRA

Why murmuring stand you thus amazed? Oh come,
Let us haste hence.

THESEUS. Heard'st thou not from the sea
Voices—voices that cried her name?

PHAEDRA. What name?
Nought else I heard save the waves' moaning.

THESEUS. Hark!

NEREIDS.

In Love's lone bower
Sleeping thou hast left, betrayed, forsaken!

THESEUS.

Betrayed! Forsaken!—Yea, the very waves,
Incensed against me, have found voice to chide me.

NEREIDS.

Thy life she gave thee;
From death her love did save thee;
And wilt thou requite her so?
Wilt thou prove false to vows so deeply taken?

THESEUS.

Wilt thou requite her so?
Wilt thou prove false to vows so deeply taken?

PHAEDRA.

So deeply taken, yet so lightly meant!
Then only wast thou false, when with false vows
Thou didst bind Love and betray thine own soul,
Not now when thou wouldst set Love free.—Theseus!
Behold, behold me, thy Phaedra, thy beloved.
What alien charm hath crept between thy soul
And its true bliss?—Thus, thus with my lips
I break it. Thus my arms around thee cast
Ward it for ever from thee. Now thou art mine.
Come! Linger no more. Thy ship waits ready.

(She leads him away.)

NEREIDS.

Thy life she gave thee, and wilt thou requite her so?
Alas for thee, Ariadne, in Love's lone bower
Outcast, unloved, by God and man forgotten,
To death abandoned!
O Lord of Naxos isle, avert this woe!

(Meanwhile torchlight mingles with the growing dawn. Enter groups of MAENADS, passing impetuously across the scene. Suddenly they are arrested by a great voice calling them from beyond: "Io! Io! Maenads of Naxos!" The MAENADS stare wildly around, then with answering cries of "Dionysus! Bromios! Evoi! Saboi!" they rush off as though following the voice. The ship of the Athenians becomes visible out to sea in the dim twilight: their song is heard from the distance.)

ATHENIANS.

O ye strong-winged foam-wanderers, glad birds of the sea,
A comrade of your roaming gladly now may I be,
Over blue calms homeward gliding, without dread, without care.

Act III SCENE II.
Scene II

(Another part of the shore of Naxos. The sea in the background to the left. On the right the ground rises to a cliff overhanging the sea. On the summit is a pine-tree. It is early morning twilight: the day is breaking slowly. A SATYR is seated upon the cliff, playing on his pan-pipes. Several others are sitting below. The SATYR stops playing and sings.)

SATYR.

Syrinx is lost, lost,
And sad is the heart of Pan, calm, sad and still
That once like a wild wave at the wind's will
Leapt with love and was tost,
Whene'er among her sister wood-nymphs walking
He saw her, or might hear her sweet voice talking,
And in some lone place longed alone to meet her,
And with speech grave and wise kindly accost her,
Then with songs than words sweeter,
Now melancholy, now blithe, enchant her mind,
So gently, gently woo her to be kind.
But meeting, ah fool, fool! his wise words fail him,
Nor aught that day might his swift hooves avail him,
But in drear reeds he lost her.

CHORUS OF SATYRS.

Fool, fool! his wise words failed him,
So in drear reeds he lost her.

SATYR.

Long ago that woe befell: long years ago
Syrinx fled, Pan pursued.
Yet not dead is Syrinx, no:
In Pan's pipes she liveth still;
There doth sleep, till oft,
In some sad mood
Tender as dusk or dawn
On upland lawn or sea-shore solitude,

With a kiss on her lips denied him now no more
He wakes her, and yet sweeter than of old
Her voice is heard, now soft,
Now clear and bold in answer to his skill.
Thus of his lost love oft
Hath Pan yet had his will.

CHORUS OF SATYRS.

Now sweeter than of old his voice is heard.
Thus of his lost love oft
Hath Pan yet had his will.

(The SATYR rises and moves slowly out of sight with his companions, playing on his pipes. ARIADNE appears breaking through the bushes in the foreground below.)

ARIADNE.

What sounds wake me?
So strange and wild, yet sweet!
Where art thou, Theseus?
Was it in dream I heard thee sing?
Nowhere I see thee by this dawn's dim light.
Yet well I know that here alone thou wilt not leave me long.

O Love, Love, that with tender thought fillest
The heart thou hast made thine own,
As the dawn with soft light
Filleth the earth and sky, and bringeth comfort
To the lone heart of Night;
O Love, Love, though evil of thee be spoken
By those that ne'er have known thee, yet I that know thee now,
Of thee will I think no evil, nor deem that thou
Canst e'er have broken
Hearts that in thee have trusted.

Though I hear not thy voice,
Though I look not within thine eyes,
Yet would that I now might know,
O my love, what thoughts are thine.

Act III Are they blissful and calm as mine?

Scene II Do the waves that upon the sand

Break, tranquil and slow,
Doth the wind that with a soft and whispering noise
Stirreth among the leaves above,
Through the grass below,
Speak to thee with a voice that now thy soul grown wise
Hearing may understand?

Yet alas, but a brief while,
When thou art hence,
May glad thoughts my loneliness beguile.
Dim fears I know not whence
In my heart arise;
For the light of the dawn's smile
On sea and land
To a frown hath faded, and changed
Are the voices of waves breaking and leaves that whisper,
In a moment grown estranged.
O my love, fain, how fain
Would I hear thy voice again,
Would I look within thine eyes!

(The sound of pan-pipes approaches again. ARIADNE starts and cries "Theseus!" She hastens to the side of the stage, but suddenly stops and turns back in terror.)

Ah!—The God of this lone isle!—
He is gone.—Theseus,
Why so long hast thou left me here alone,
Where such things haunt?
Yet for what cause did terror master me so?
They are nought but silly woodland Satyrs. Yonder
Their goat-foot traces!—Ah yet,
Now my strange dream comes back.
Not causeless were my fears.
Did I not dream that thou didst leave me, Theseus?

Upon thy ship over calm, windless seas
Together were we drifting, thou and I

Alone. In thine embrace I lay, while sweet
Serene enchantment filled me, gazing deep
Within thine eyes—when suddenly their light
With cloudy trouble darkened, as a voice
Was heard, I knew not whence, calling thy name
Again, again, yea many times: “Come, Theseus!
Come! Long hast thou delayed. O Theseus, come!”
Then slowly, without word, as one in trance,
Arising from my arms, that in vain strove
To stay him, down he leapt through the still deep,
That frothing closed. Straightway in wild anguish
Had I too then leapt down: but (oh, terror!)
Vainly my feet toiled, strangled and close entwined
With sudden clasping growth of ivy and vine,
That over mast and sail and cordage trailed
And climbed deck-rooted, till with whispering leaves
And scent of flowers the whole ship was filled.
And from the foliage towards me, lo, there stole
A serpent forth, that in swift gliding coils
Enwound me, and o’er my heart fixed deep its sting.
Yet who may know in truth what dreams portend?
From the Gods are they, or sometimes perchance
Blind ghosts from Chaos? Lo from that burning wound
Not death’s expected anguish, but a strange
Exhilarating rapture, a calm bliss
Spread through my spirit, domineering there
Like new life poured within me by some God.
Alas, therefrom reft of my soul’s true bliss
Forlorn I waked. Where art thou? Was it then
Poseidon called thee from me to himself,
As my dream bodes?

(Suddenly ARIADNE perceives the black sail of the ATHENIAN ship some distance out at sea. She starts forward.)

The ship!—Ah! He is coming.
For this cause he left me,
But why so far out seaward!
Past yonder reef with the wind it steers;

Act III
Scene II

But tacking soon
This way with sails furled and oars bent
Hither will it glide to where I stand.—
Ah!
The rocks are passed,
Yet with sail and oar still seaward, seaward!—
It is not, nor can be—not Theseus' ship.
Yet the sail, the death-black sail,
That is no dream, but speeds fast fast away.
Theseus! Turn! Look hither! Behold, behold me,
Thine Ariadne! Leave me not here to die.
Theseus! Theseus!

(She rushes out. From all sides enter the SATYRS. They gaze after ARIADNE with excited gestures. One of the SATYRS appears older and less grotesque than the rest. It is DIONYSUS, who will not yet reveal himself.)

A SATYR.

Wild with fear she seems. Look yonder! Madly along death's brink she
speeds,
Blind to the surging gulf beneath her: the far black sail alone she heeds.

OTHERS DISPERSEDLY.

Still onward, as though she fain would follow across the waves in wing-
less flight.
Now on the cliff's verge she pauses. Headlong will she leap? Ah me!

No: see, see!

Onward again she stumbles wildly, around yon crags, till lost from sight.

Come then, follow.

DIONYSUS. No, forbear. Contend not rashly with despair.

A SATYR.

Haste, the Maenads let us seek: they alone may help her now,
Set the thyrsus in her hand, with vine and ivy wreath her brow.

OTHERS.

Woe-struck hearts by them inspired oft the sacred madness cures.

DIONYSUS.

Nay, not sorrow such as hers.
How should she their wild words hear,
Listening alone to her despair?

SATYRS.

First in the spent cinders of desire
Must sink and die this fierce consuming fire.

A SATYR.

But oh, till then may no mischance befall her!

DIONYSUS.

Doth Dionysus guide the event unseen?

(DIONYSUS retires above to the pine-tree.)

A SATYR.

With some strange stress of fear and hope unknown
The night seemed filled. One while
From the moonlit waves I heard
Voices of Nereids wailing and foreboding.

ALL TOGETHER.

Hear us, O Dionysus! May no stain
Of mortal woe profane these hallowed shores!
From thy loved isle avert death's sacrilege!

(Exeunt all except DIONYSUS, who remains standing under the pine-tree. Re-enter ARIADNE exhausted and dishevelled. She throws herself down dejectedly.)

ARIADNE.

Theseus false! Theseus false!—Such words mean nought.

Was thy pride then so dear to thee,
Was the world's glory so sweet,

Act III That at such price thou couldst purchase them,
Scene II Not with truth, but with perjury, with perfidy,
 Not with mercy, but with merciless deceit?

Would that to Minos' vengeance I had rendered me:
So never had I known what than death's self
More bitter now dying I know, thus ruthlessly
By those I saved rewarded, and by those I loved
Thus scorned and betrayed.

(She has now risen to her feet.)

Yet thy love ne'er did I claim from thee,
Thy vows ne'er did I require;
But without hope, without love's guerdon
From thy doom still with what gladness had I saved thee,
Nor confessed to thee the shame of thy desire!

And thine own heart no less didst thou beguile?
Surprised wast thou by pity or joy's first-born
Impatient transport, which one moment filled
Thy heart with gratitude, love's counterfeit,
Then left it cold and cruel?—Yet not thee,
Let me not call thee cruel, but the Gods,
The ruthless Gods, whose will through my ruin
Alone, and through thy shame might be revealed.

(Meanwhile she has mounted up, and approaches the edge of the cliff.)

Yet once of Gods far other than these are,
Powers not in glory only but in truth
And righteousness divine, hath been my dream;
Yea and of heroes, children of the Gods,
Nobler in deed and heart than men whose fate
On earth they shared. For Love's vintage my soul
Thirsted, and of Love's wine did I drink deep.
False, false was that dream;
Bitter as death that cup.

Act III A quickening and transforming power—till lo!
Scene II Forth from the haunted Labyrinth of despair,
 Where blindly thy woe-wildered spirit gropes,
 Radiant shall it issue, like a bride
 New-wed, with joy beholding all things now
 With its own essence harmonised and made one.

This God, even such as oft in thoughts obscure
Deep-dreaming trance revealed thou hast foreknown,
O Ariadne, wouldst thou know him now?

ARIADNE.

I fear thee: thy strange words I fear. Leave me,
That I may die. Not thy God, but Persephone,
Guardian of Lethe's well, would I now seek,
That forthwith she may give me at my prayer
To drink of that dark wave, whereof athirst
I perish, yea, of this world's wrong and misery
Deep, deep dreamless oblivion without end.

DIONYSUS.

No, not from hateful Lethe's dark death-stream
In Hades shalt thou drink; but with the wine
Of rapture and remembrance shalt thou quench
Thy thirst, till thy parched soul renew its strength,
And waking straight remember whence it came,
Child of Earth and starry Heaven, grown now
Worthy of its birth and heritage divine.

ARIADNE.

Who art thou that divinest and wouldst mock
My soul's forgotten dreams?

DIONYSUS.

I am he whose Maenad prophetess thou wast
Even then within the Labyrinth.—

ARIADNE. (Distraught.) The Labyrinth!
The Labyrinth!—Theseus, where art thou?

DIONYSUS. (*Continuing through ARIADNE'S delirium.*)

Act III
Scene II

—Of my vintage,
Not from the bitter earth-born grapes of Death,
But pressed forth from the Vine of Life, even then
Drunken, though thou knewest not, was thy soul.

ARIADNE.

The clue!
Oh horror! 'Tis fallen—lost!
Whither did it roll? Search, search!

DIONYSUS.

Ariadne!

ARIADNE.

Theseus, is it thou?
Art thou too wandering lost through this wild maze?
The clue! Search, search!
Hast thou found it? Fly then! Oh leave me!
Quick, quick, lest thou too perish.—
No, for me take no thought.
To the cave where she awaits thee!
She is thine, Phaedra, thy beloved.—
He is gone. 'Tis well.
O Love, Love!
Whither, whither to perish hast thou led me!
In thee still do I trust.
Lead me forth to the light.

DIONYSUS.

Ariadne!
Still will I be thy guide.

ARIADNE. (*Moving towards DIONYSUS.*)

Again that dream-heard voice! Me now it calleth.
Follow then! Follow!—Ah!
What stays me, what clasps my feet?
Vines seize and beset them;
Ivy grasps and encoils me.

Act III
Scene II

The barren rocks break forth in leaf and flower.

Ah see! There! There! The serpent!

Forth from the leaves swiftly it glideth towards me.

O Lethe, Lethe!

Is this thy herald?

Come, come, enfold, embrace me!

Welcome art thou;

Welcome to my heart is now thy death-drenched sting.

Here, here enfix it.

Ah Lethe! Lethe!

DIONYSUS.

O Semele, my mother, slain by fire,

Not cruel as thy lover's be my love!

(ARIADNE grasps the outstretched thyrsus of DIONYSUS. There is a fiery flash, and she falls to the ground at the God's feet. Meanwhile thick vapours, which have been rising from the sea, are gathering around them, till they are shrouded wholly from view. The voice of DIONYSUS is heard calling from the mist.)

DIONYSUS.

Io! Io! Maenads of Naxos!

(The cries of approaching BACCHANALS are heard.)

BACCHANALS.

Dionysus! Dionysus! Evoi! Saboi! O Bromios, Bromios!

(Enter the MAENADS and SATYRS impetuously. They fill the lower stage, which is free from mist.)

BACCHANALS. (Severally.)

Heard ye the voice—the voice of our Bromios?

Where is she, the forsaken one?

Evilly my heart bodeth.

To the waves she hath leapt; she is slain!

Oh see!—There! There!

(The vapours have now risen and dispersed, revealing DIONYSUS transfigured to his authentic form as a God, and ARIADNE, who stands beside him in the attire of a Bacchanal, bearing the thyrsus in her hand. The MAENADS and SATYRS remain below, gazing up at them in hushed and awe-stricken adoration.)

DIONYSUS.

O thou pure soul,
Thou chosen shrine of Justice and of Love,
Through mortal suffering winnowed and found true,
Out of the weary wheel of change and woe
Hast thou flown forth; my thyrsus in thy hand,
My fawn-skin on thy shoulders have I set;
Thy brows with vine and ivy have I crowned.
Mortal henceforth no more, the Bride art thou
Of Dionysus, that God whom unknown
So long thy thirsting spirit had desired.
Child of Earth and starry Heaven, my wine
For thee I pour, pressed forth from Life's true Vine.

CHORUS OF BACCHANALS.

Blessed art thou, O Bride divine!
He whom the whole world loves is thine,
Our Thyoneus, the hope and the delight
Of deities and mortals, yea, our Evius, the Lord
Of the Vine of Life, whose roots,
Deep as Tartarus entwined,
From the strong heart of the Earth draw their might:
And abroad o'er all the world to the starry Heavens above
Are its leaves and tendrils curled, and from its fruits
He presseth forth his wine into the bowl
Of rapture and remembrance, that the soul of all mankind
From sorrow and from death setteth loose.
Dithurambos, son of Zeus!
Yet Sorrow's child is he,
Born of sad Semele,
Whom love untimely slew.
O sorrow-pitying heart! O Love divine
There springing ever new!

Act III Yea, blessed Ariadne, for thee too,
Scene II And for thy love-born woe,
 Pity divine within that heart to Love
 Divine did grow.
 Child of Earth and starry Heaven, for thee his wine
 Dionysus poureth forth from Life's true Vine.

ARIADNE.

Mine Iacchus, have I found thee,
Thou my true, my heavenly Lethe?
In thy glad life-giving vintage
Have I quenched my soul's long thirst?
O thou serpent world-sustaining,
All-enfolding, now I know thee;
Now, oh now thy quickening poison within my new-born heart is burning,
Round my soul now art thou winding;
Now I know thee, dream-foreknown,
Mine Iacchus, O my God!

Whither, Bacchus, wouldst thou guide me
Earth and ocean far above,
Within thy brightness folded, lifted, sheltered by thy love?
Amid revelling stars fire-breathing,
Their rapt dance ever wreathing,
The music of their choirs within my soul,
With thee, O Dionysus, thee the world's life, the world's glory,
With the fullness of thy Godhead made whole!

THE END

POEMS AND TRANSLATIONS

THE ROOKS

I am wakened by the rooks cawing.
I rise quickly, and cross to the open window.
The sun is not yet risen;
But overhead the clouds are softly flushed,
And between them, cold and bright, the thin moon floats.

All is still in the valley.
But the wind just stirs the sombre tops of the sycamores,
And out of their thick leafage the rooks by hundreds
Are hurrying and rushing,
Wildly they sweep, mixing, severing,
In a tumult of stormy gladness hither and thither swerving and eddying
Under the soft-flushed clouds and the calm moon.

I too awhile, as I watch them,
With their rapture and their swiftness become one.
The wide-spreading earth and the windy paths of the dawn
For adventure and delight are my own,—
A brief while; for now
On a sudden, as with a single will,
They settle steadily their measured flight
Diminishing and vanishing afar.
Then all is silence.

A laggard bird
Wings swiftly past me—another, then no more.
I shiver in the chilling wind: the clouds whiten.

THE MOUNTAIN BROOK

As I wandered o'er the fell,
I heard the voice of a grassy rill,
Talking quietly to itself,
Falling from green shelf to shelf.
I sat down and listened long
To the burden of its song.

“ Rustling grasses, hum of bees,
Falling runlets, sounds like these,
Earnest, calm monotonies,
Tranquil rapture, gentle mirth,
Best may please my mother Earth,
From whose bosom I well forth.

“ This is so, full well I know.
Therefore from mossy pool to pool
Ever for ever clear and cool
Through the grasses will I flow,
Singing softly in her ear
That song she loveth best to hear.”

While I listened, crept a cloud
O'er the mountain shroud by shroud,
Swift black eddies of turbid smoke
Glooming the sky with a stormy frown.
Terribly the strong thunder broke;
The great drops fell; the wind swept down.

The storm passed onward; heaven grew bright.
Down the glistening mountain side
A hundred streams leapt foaming white.
And of all the loudest and most strong
Was the voice of my rill; and this was the song
It sang to the sky in its strength and pride.

“ O father, my father, thy child am I.
I have heard thy voice from the storm-swept sky:
I have felt thy breath; I have seen, I have known
Thy dark rain-garment wind-outblown.
Return, O my father, fierce and wild.
Hearest thou not thy storm-born child?”

THE WILD CHERRY

Drear, drear the cold winds blow,
Chill drives the rain.
Fast, fast, like flakes of snow,
From the white wild cherry fall
With each gust its blossoms all.
Yet, soon shall bare boughs grow
Green with leaf again.

Thoughts drifting bleak and numb,
Hope spent in vain,
Memories chilled and dumb
The heart's long dark winter through,
When shall ye wake anew?
When, when shall Summer come
With leaf and flower again?

LAMENT

Once would I take the wings of the wild bird,
Joyous and swift and free,
Ascend to the uttermost heights of heaven, there
Where nought is heard
Save stars' faint singing only,
Visit the foam of oceans vast and lonely,
Drear waves, ne'er
By sail yet whitened, broken by no prow.
O heart, proud heart, no more! ne'er as of old!
Lost is thy courage, failed thy strength, and thou
As death grown cold.

CHARON

After a Modern Greek Ballad.

“Thou gaunt grey-bearded boatman
With thy long oar in thy hand,
Who art thou, and what this people
That flock down to the strand?”

“Why do they weep and loiter,
As loth to leave the shore?
And why dost thou scowl and threaten,
And smite them with thine oar?”

“If thou art young, then haste thee
To the prow: thy place is there.
Or art thou old, then seat thee
In the stern: there is room to spare.

“But art thou a small and tender child,
In the ship’s midst yonder see
Where in rows are sitting thy playmates.
Lo there is the place for thee.”

The ship hath started on her voyage,
She hath sailed but a little way,
When young and old together cry:
“O Charon, thy vessel stay.

“Stay now thy ship, O Charon,
At some village near the shore,
Where a spring of fresh water wellet forth—
But a brief while and no more.

“There the old shall rest, and the young shall play
With the quoit, and dance and sing,
While the children roam through the meadows,
And gather the flowers of Spring.”

But his grey head Charon shaketh,
And stern is his answer: "Nay,
My ship bides at no village,
For fresh springs makes no stay.

"The women that from the village
To the well for water fare
Would each one find their children,
Their lovers and brothers there.

"If once were meeting and greeting,
Hand to hand, lip to lip,
Hard were my task to part them
And drive them to my ship.

"Dream not of landing nor tarrying,
Hope not your thirst to slake,
Till ye enter the halls of Hades,
Till ye drink of Lethe's lake."

GREEK FOLK SONG

"It was dark night, and there was no man nigh.
Who then beheld our love?
All slept save only thou and I."

"The night beheld us: each star was a spy
That watched us from above.
A star stole softly down the sky: .

"Into the sea methought I saw it fall.
It told the waves, and they
Straight to an oar's blade whispered all.

"And last the sailor heard it from his oar;
And his song loud and gay
Floats mocking o'er the harbour to the shore."

SONGS

I

Before I tire of loving thee, my love,
The stars shall drop and drown them in the sea;
Forth from the waves shall all their fishes flee,
And winged like birds seek out the skies above,
And silver-bright shine in the stars' place there,
Before, my love, I tire of loving thee.

Before I weary of thy love, my dear,
The wind shall first grow weary of his toil,
And the trees of their leaves no more despoil;
The clouds shall turn to mountains in mid air,
The waves to furrowed fields from shore to shore,
Ere I shall love thee, O my love, no more.

II

My love among all lovely things
Is loveliest and rarest.
Not the dawn's gold-glancing wings
Her brightness can exceed.
Starry skies, veil your eyes;
Her eyes are fairest.
Nightingales, whene'er she sings,
Be mute, nor strive with harsher throats
Against that voice, whose sweet notes
No discords should need.

Within my heart there sings a bird;
From Love his skill he learneth.
By me alone his song is heard,
Joyous, free and tender.
"Spring is here. Have no fear.
Love's Spring returneth.
As I bid thee, word by word
Sing thou till her heart shall thrill,
And she shall know 'tis Love's will,
And to his might surrender."

III

When dreaming of thy beauty by the sea
Musing alone I stand,
Oft have I thought, would that this now might be,
That the white waves breaking upon the sand
Were each a flower fair,
That I might pluck and bear them to thy hand.

But when I see thee by the water's side,
Nor dare to venture nigh,
Oh then I would I were a wave to glide
Forth from the deep and perish with a sigh:
Yea that indeed were sweet,
To break around thy feet in foam and die.

THE THRUSH'S SONG

To yon thicket hind and hart go rarely.
(Flower of the bramble!)
Green have grown the woods early, so early.
Tell me, maiden, whom seek'st thou here?
Through the leaves why dost thou peer?
In these green woods wherefore dost thou ramble?
Oh beware, beware
Thorns that catch and tear!
Between the briars the primrose spreads so sweetly.

To yon garden hind and hart go never.
(Flower of the lily!)
There the grass grows green and soft as ever.
Boy and maiden, what seek they here?
O'er the green grass they draw near:
Mid the roses meet they willy nilly.
Oh beware, beware
Love that lurketh there!
Between the roses spreads the grass so sweetly.

DIRGES

I

Ever fresh must those meadows be, and clear
Those skies and fountains whither thou art gone,
So fair, so calm, so bright amidst us here
Thy spirit shone.

Like a bird from the snare escaped, thy plumes
Joyously hast thou shaken, and soared forth
Aloft, afar, beyond all mortal glooms
Homeward from earth.

Thou to thy bliss art flown; we here remain
Desolate and bereft, nor where thou art
May our woe follow winged with dirges vain,
But breaks like a spent billow on the heart.

II

Gone is he now.
One flower the less
Is left to make
For thee less lone
Earth's wilderness,
Where thou
Must still live on.

What hath been, ne'er
May be again.
Yet oft of old,
To cheat despair,
Tales false and fair
In vain
Of death were told.

O vain belief!
O'erweening dreams!
Trust not fond hope,
Nor think *that* bliss
Which neither seems,
Nor is,
Aught else than grief.

ITALIAN FOLK SONGS

I

Think not with a thread to bind me,
With one glance to win my love. Beware;
Not so simple shalt thou find me.

Trust not when I smile towards thee.
Though so sweet I smile, yet have a care
Lest thy trust with grief reward thee.

Yet, if knowing truth may ease thee,
That I love by all the saints I swear—
But not thee. Doth now truth please thee?

II

Across the sea now far hence must I fare,
And thou shalt hear no tidings of me more.
A star I leave thee as my signal there.
When that grows dim, then weep, my love, weep sore.
But when that star dark as night's self has grown,
Weep, weep, for in my grave then I lie lone.

III

I thought that Love, so fair at first it seemed,
Had been some pleasant game;
But now I find it not as once I deemed,
But a fierce fiery flame.

Not all the waters in the clouds above,
In streams and lakes beneath,
Not the vast sea itself may quench this Love,
Nought else now but Death.

IV

I went to Rome to see Saint Peter's church;
But when to the first column I was come,
I thought of thee, and straightway turned back home,
And left the Pope and Peter in the lurch.

PARAPHRASED FROM WOLFRAM VON ESCHENBACH.

Herzeloida, the mother of Parcial, laments the death of her husband Gahmuret.

“O misery and sorrow! Where, where now is my soul's dear life!
The nobleness of Gahmuret enlarged my heart with joy.
Alas, alas for his proud renown! Alas for his hardihood!
In battle was his delight, his pride; and therefore have I lost him.
Less are my years than his, far less: yet young though I may seem,
For him am I not both a bride and a mother too? for behold,
Do I not bear his body within my own, the seed of his life?
Such the dear exchange he gave me for our tender love.
If God's designs be just, ah then will he not suffer now
This fruit to ripen for my sake? Reft of a lord so noble,
Shall not that loss suffice? Or is cruel Death not yet content?”
These words she sighed, then with her arms encircled her womb and child;
And, “O my God,” she cried, “preserve this offspring of Gahmuret:
From my soul's depth this I implore. Deliver me moreover
From mad temptation. A second time should Gahmuret be slain,
If in despair I struck myself, who bear beneath my heart
This living pledge by his love so committed to my charge.”
No heed she took of who stood by: her gown she rent away:
Her breast she took and drew it forth, shining smooth and white,
Gazing awhile in tender joy; then pressed it with sweet grace
Towards her lips. “'Tis thou,” she said, “art storehouse for my babe
Of life and nourishment: aye, 'twas he by whom thou hast been prepared
Since first within me he took life.” Great joy was hers to see
How the milk lay there and covered her heart. Some few drops she
pressed forth,
Then spake again: “Sincere and holy is thy source, I know.
Though baptism I had ne'er received, yet well instead thereof
Wouldst thou have served me. Now for teardrops shalt thou serve me oft,
Whene'er in public or in secret I lament my lord.”

Herzeloida bade them bring the blood-stained coat-of-arms,
Which Gahmuret had worn that day he found the hero's death
For which he longed. They brought her too the lance-head that had
slain him.

Blows to a very rag had pierced and rent the broidered silk:
Yet would she robe herself therein, her custom in old days
Whene'er her lord returned from battle. But despite her prayers,
Her noble vassals took them from her hands, and to a cloister
Bore them away with solemn pomp, and gave them burial there
As to a king. And now when fourteen days were past, a son
She brought forth. Great and large of limb already was the child.
And when she and her women having turned and turned it again
Had found the clear proofs of its sex, oh then what smiles, what laughter!
How they redoubled glad caresses upon the little boy!
Should he not one day play the forger mightily with his sword?
Smite sparks from casques and prove his virile strength? So the women
chattered.

But his mother sighed: far other were her thoughts. Their babbling tongues
Brought back into her mind the death of Gahmuret. Yet now
What happiness to cover him with kisses over and over!

Shunning the fault of many women, she resolved forthwith
To be the nurse of her own child. Sometimes to her fancy
It seemed as though Gahmuret to her prayers had been restored
Back to her arms. Unceasingly she lavished on the boy
Care and devotion. Oft to herself these pious words she said:
"The most sublime of queens once gave her breast to him who endured
A cruel death, nailed to the cross to prove his love for man."
From the queen's face the bitter dews of sorrow oft fell down
Over her child. All women's gracious qualities were hers.
How the same time to smile and sigh her beauteous mouth knew well.
One moment it grew gay with joy to have born a son; the next
The pretty playful words in grieving from her lips died off.

FROM THEOGNIS

Friend, let us be comrades still, though sundered far apart.
Of all things, save of wealth alone, there comes satiety.
Long then remain we friends: but thou go mingle in life's mart
With men who better know thy mind than e'er 'twas known by me.

FROM ALCMAN

Slumbering are the mountains, crest and chasm,
Ravine and precipice,
And every creeping thing on the earth's dark breast,
Beasts in their forest lairs and the tribes of the bees,
And monsters within the depths of the purple seas:
Slumbering too are the birds,
Their swift wings laid to rest.

FROM THE AJAX OF SOPHOCLES

All things the long and countless lapse of Time
Brings forth, displays, then hides once more in gloom.
Nought is too strange to look for; but the event
May mock the sternest oath, the firmest will.
Thus I, who erst so strong, so stubborn seemed
Like iron dipped, yet now grow soft with pity
Towards this woman, whom I am loth to leave
Midst foes a widow with this orphaned child.
But I will seek the meadows by the shore:
There will I wash and purge these stains, if so
I may appease Athene's heavy wrath.
Then will I find some lonely place, where I
May hide this sword beyond all others cursed,
Buried where none may see it, deep in earth.
May Night and Hades keep it there below.
For from that hour my hand accepted it
The gift of Hector, deadliest of my foes,
Nought from the Greeks towards me hath sped well.
So now I find that ancient proverb true,
No gifts are foes' gifts: profit bring they none.
Therefore henceforth I study to obey
The Gods, and reverence the sons of Atreus.
Our rulers are they: we must yield. How else?
For to authority yield all things most dread

And mighty. Thus must Winter's snowy feet
Give place to Summer with her wealth of fruits;
And from her weary round doth Night withdraw,
That Day's white steeds may kindle heaven with light.
After fierce tempest calm will ever lull
The moaning sea; and Sleep, that masters all,
Binds life awhile, yet loosens soon the bond.
And who am I that I should not learn wisdom?
Of all men I, whom proof hath taught of late
How so far only should we hate our foes
As though we soon might love them, and so far
Do a friend service as to one most like
Some day to prove our foe; since oftenest men
In friendship but a faithless haven find.
Thus am I well resolved. Thou, woman, pass
Within, and pray the Gods that all things so
May be accomplished as my heart desires.
And you, friends, heed my wishes as she doth.
And when he comes, bid Teucer he must guard
My rights at need, and withal stand you friend.
For now I go whither I needs must pass.
Do as I bid. Soon haply you shall hear,
With me, for all this misery, 'tis most well.

LUCRETIUS. BOOK I.

Thou mother of Rome's race, thou delight of Gods and of mortals,
Bountiful Venus, who under the gliding signs of the Heavens
Hauntest the great ship-carrying sea, fillest full with thy power
The corn-bearing land, since every living breathing generation
Through thee first is conceived, then rises and looks on the sunlight.
All winds cease, all clouds in the sky take flight from before thee,
Goddess, and thine advent; glad Earth lays forth in abundance
Sweet flowers under thy feet, and the smooth deep laughs to behold thee,
Heaven grows calm, and its countenance shines with diffusion of glory.
For soon as the day looks down upon earth with aspect vernal,
And fresh from his prison leaps forth the birth-giving breeze of Favonius,

First the birds of the air show sign thy power is upon them,
Goddess, as through their hearts surges thy masterful influence.
Next the wild herds of beasts leap over the pleasant pastures,
And swim through the rapid streams: so doth each one, caught by thy
witchcraft,

Follow with eager feet to the end thy will hath appointed.
Yea, through deep seas, through mountains, through impetuous rivers,
Through the leaf-built homes of the birds, and the verdant prairies,
Piercing their hearts with bland love through, thou art cause that all
creatures

Lust each after its kind to renew their races in offspring.
Therefore seeing that thou, thou only art Nature's mistress,
And that without thee nought can rise forth into the daylight's
Glorious borders, nought can grow to be gladsome and lovely,
Thee now fain would I win for a helpmate, while I am toiling
Verse upon verse, that the Nature of Things be nobly expounded
For this child of the Memmian house, whom thou, Goddess, hast willed
All his days to excel, found peerless in every perfection.

Therefore the more to my words give beauty and charm everlasting:
Bring it to pass meanwhile that the savage business of warfare
Over all seas and throughout all lands sink hushed into slumber:
Since thou only hast power to bless mankind with the boon of
Tranquil peace; for of war's savage works sole master is Mavors,
Mighty in combat, who oft flings himself into thy bosom,
Vanquished utterly by Love's wound eternal, unhealing;
And so with upturned face and shapely neck thrown backward
Feedeth his hungering looks with love, as upon thee, O Goddess,
Gazing he lies, and around thy lips his rapt spirit hovers.
Over him in such wise on thy hallowed bosom reposing,
Stoop thou low, and with importunity tender and winsome,
O great Goddess, entreat calm peace for the Roman people.
For neither can I at my task in our fatherland's hour of affliction
Toil with a tranquil mind, nor the noble scion of Memmius
Find leisure in such times from guarding the public welfare.

Therefore a leisured hearing, an intellect eager and watchful,
Freed from all cares, would I have thee bring to veracious reasoning,
Lest my gifts, set forth for thine eyes with faithful endeavour,
Ere they be understood, thou shouldst disdainfully abandon.

For now must I essay to discourse of the most high system
Of Heaven and the Gods, and expound those primordials of existence,
Whence Nature createth, increaseth and nourisheth all things,
And whereto she resolveth again what is perished and outworn.
These we are wont likewise to describe as material substance,
Or begetting bodies: sometimes moreover we call them
Seeds of existing things: or as first bodies we define them,
Since from those elements first comes forth all that hath being.

When prostrate upon earth, foully and contemptibly cast down,
Prone lay human life, crushed under the weight of Religion,
Who, showing forth her head from the regions of heaven above, loomed
Lowering down upon mortal men with horrible aspect,
First did a man of Greece dare boldly to lift up against her
His weak mortal eyes, yea, first to withstand and defy her.
Him neither stories of Gods, nor lightnings, nor heaven's anger
With menacing murmur could quell, but the more did they rouse his
Soul's impetuous zeal, till he longed to be first and foremost
To shatter and burst open the fast-locked portals of Nature.
Therefore the fervent force of his soul, far speeding beyond the
Flame-girt boundaries of this world, invincibly set forth
Ranging in mind and thought through the unscanned vastnesses of space,
Whence he brings to us back victorious knowledge of what can
And what cannot arise, and upon what principle each thing
Hath finite functions and inherent fixed limitations.
Therefore now is Religion to earth cast down, and beneath us
Trampled in turn: ourselves heaven-high his victory exalteth.

Herein a fear obtrudes lest thou shouldst haply imagine
Thou art entering into a school of reasoning unholy,
Into a path of unrighteous thought, whereas this Religion
Ofttimes hath given birth to unrighteous and unholy actions.
Thus were the altar steps of the Trivian Virgin at Aulis
By those chosen chiefs of the Greeks, sublimest of heroes,
Foully and basely defiled with the life-blood of Iphianassa.
For soon as the ritual fillet enwreathing her maidenly tresses
Fastened in equal lengths down either cheek fell loosely,
And soon as her eyes were aware of her father dejectedly standing
There at the altar's base, and beside him the priestly attendants

Hiding the knife, and around them the folk weeping to behold her,
Down to the earth she sank upon faint knees speechless in terror.
Nor might it in that hour of supreme anguish avail her
That she first had gladdened the king with the name of father;
For lifted on high in the hands of men, trembling to the altars
Was she borne, not that after the ancient rites were accomplished
She might be escorted along by clear-chanted hymenaeals,
But stainless maid mid the stain of blood, in a season for marriage
Timelier, to fall a forlorn victim by the stroke of a father,
That so heaven might grant to the fleet a prosperous sailing.
Unto such monstrous deeds could the voice of Religion seduce men.

FROM CATULLUS

Thou miserable Catullus, cease from foolish talk,
And what thou see'st is lost and perished, deem that lost.
The sun shone fair and bright upon thee in those days,
When thou didst follow wheresoe'er thy mistress led,
She thou didst love as never other shall be loved.
There all those many blithe and pleasant deeds were done
Which thou desiredst; nor did she desire them less.
Verily the sun shone fair and bright upon thee then.
Now she saith nay: thou too, since there's no help, say nay.
Pursue not one who flies thee, nor live miserable,
But with a mind grown resolute endure, be stern.
Mistress, farewell. At length Catullus hath grown stern:
He will not seek thee, nor entreat thee against thy will.
But thou shalt grieve when no man shall entreat thee more.
Alas, poor wretch! What bitter life must now be thine?
Who now shall court thee? To whom shalt thou seem beautiful?
Whom wilt thou love now? By whose name shalt thou be called?
Whom shalt thou kiss? Whose lips in fondness wilt thou bite?
But thou, Catullus, be thou resolute and stern.

THE ATTYS OF CATULLUS

Across the deep seas Attys on a swift vessel voyaging,
When he reached the Phrygian woodland eagerly with impetuous feet,
And approached the Goddess's dusk-filled, forest-girdled holy ground,
There spurred by raging madness, in a wildering ecstasy,
He destroyed with severing flint-stone the vigour of his lusty youth.
So beholding now his limbs spoiled of their manhood irrevocably,
While still the soil with fresh stains from the wound was maculated,
She snatched up an airy timbrel in her snowy feminine hands,
Thy timbrel, O Mother Cybele, clarion of thy mysteries,
And with delicate fingers smiting the reverberate hollow of hide,
Thus in song to her companions she broke forth tremulously.
"Come, ye Gallae! To the deep woods of Cybele let us away!
Come away together, O strayed herd of the Lady of Dindymus!
Ye that like a band of exiles in quest of an alien home,
At the call of me your leader, my companions and followers,
Have endured the gulping surges and the ocean's savagery,
And have here undone your manhood through utter abhorrence of Love;
Let the thrilling brass uplift you in a vagabond ecstasy;
From your souls cast dull delay: come! follow now together with me
To the Phrygian house of Cybele, to the Goddess's Phrygian grove,
Where the clash of cymbals soundeth, where the timbrel re-echoeth,
And the deep note from the curved reed of the Phrygian piper is heard,
Where the Maenads ivy-cinctured toss their heads back vehemently,
Where they shake the holy emblems with shrill ululating cries,
Where that roving rout of the Goddess to and fro is wont to flit,
Whither now 'tis meet for us too to be whirled in a rapid dance."
When thus to her comrades Attys, woman yet no woman, had sung,
On a sudden with tremulous voices those revellers cry aloud,
While the light timbrel rebellows, clash the cymbals with hollow din.
Swiftly towards leaf-clad Ida moves the rout with hurrying feet.
In their midst, delirious, panting, at a breathless and giddy speed,
To the sound of timbrels Attys through the dark wood leads the way,
As an untamed heifer flying from the threat of the heavy yoke.
On speed the Gallae following their leader's impetuous feet.
So when to the house of Cybele dragging weary steps they are come,
Overwrought by toil they sink down with fast unbroken to rest.
Drowsily descending slumber weighs heavily down their eyes.

In a gentle sleep the mad rage of their souls vanishes away.
But when now with radiant glances from his golden face the sun
Had surveyed the lustrous ether, solid earth and turbulent sea,
And dispelled the shades of twilight with his eager trampling steeds,
Then Sleep from awakening Atty's fled away: quickly was he gone.
Him his bride, divine Pasithea, to her fluttering bosom received.
So arisen from gentle slumber, from his wild delirium freed,
Whenas Atty's had bethought him of the deed he in folly had done,
And beheld in thought's clear vision without what and where he was,
Back now to the waves he hastened in tumultuous agony of soul.
There across the waste sea gazing through the tears gathering in her eyes,
In a woeful voice her fatherland she invoked thus piteously.
"O Fatherland that createdst me! O Fatherland of my birth!
Whom I, as a household slave doth, from his master a fugitive,
To my ruin have forsaken, and to Ida's forest have fled,
Amid snows and mid the cold lairs of the beasts to lay me down,
And to visit the lurking places of their surly ferocity:
Where then, within what quarter shall I seek thee, O Fatherland?
Verily mine eyes are longing toward thee to turn their gaze,
While yet my soul a brief space from its fierce delirium is free.
Shall I now within this wild wood from my home be banished afar?
From Fatherland, possessions, friends, parents shall I be gone?
Gone from market and from playground, from racing and wrestling field?
Again and again bewail thee, O miserable, miserable soul!
For what form of human semblance is there now which I have not worn?
I a woman now, I a youth once, I a stripling, a boy have been;
I the flower erst of the playground, I the pride of the wrestling place:
For me were doorways crowded, for me a threshold astir,
For me gaily was the house decked with many a coronal of flowers,
When at sunrise I would pass forth from the chambers where I had slept.
Shall I now be called a God's slave, handmaiden of Cybele?
I a Maenad, I of my own self but a part, I a barren man?
Shall I dwell in leafy Ida's chilly snow-clad wilderness?
Shall I pass my life 'neath Phrygia's high mountain precipices,
With the hind that haunts the forest, with the woodland-ranging boar?
Now, now my deed torments me; now, now am I penitent."
But soon as the voice of Atty's had escaped from his ruddy lips,
Bringing with it a message unwelcome to the ears of divinity,
From her lions forthwith Cybele loosening the fastened yoke,

And goading the left-hand monster, that spoiler of herd and flock,
Cried, " Away now, fiercely away! Speed! Let a frenzy fasten on him ;
Let the stroke of madness hunt him back again to the wild forest,
Even him who to impious freedom would escape my sovereignty.
With thy tail lash back and flank ; hence, with thy strokes infuriated!
See to it that all around thee re-echo with bellowing roar.
They tawny main ferociously toss upon thy sinewy neck."
In her wrath so speaketh Cybele, and her hand unbinds the yoke.
By his own lashings the fell beast rouseth him to fury of heart.
With a roar he is sped, he crashes through the brushwood impetuously.
But soon as down to the foam-white margin of the waves he came,
And beheld the tender Attys by the smooth glitter of the sea,
He bounds at him: the boy madly flies back to the savage wood.
There his whole life ever dwelt he a handmaiden and ministress.
Great Goddess, O Goddess Cybele, holy Lady of Dindymus!
Ever far from my habitations be thy fury, O my Queen.
Others goad thou with thy frenzy, others goad to insanity.



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